

417

A

S E R M O N

19

Preached, by ORDER of

HER IMPERIAL MAJESTY,

ON THE TOMB OF
PETER THE GREAT,

IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Peterfbourg.

By PLATON, Archbishop of TWER.

L O N D O N:

Printed in the Year MDCCLXX.

410



THIS Sermon was preached the day after the news of the Victory over the Turkish Fleet was received at Petersbourg; and is translated into English, by desire of the Princess Daschoff, in order to give some idea of her Imperial Majesty's Character, and of Russian Eloquence.

A

S E R M O N.

IF the memory of the Great and Good ought according to the word of God to be had in everlasting remembrance; assembled here as we are, what else can engage our attention, what else excite our praise and admiration, but the founder of this Temple and City, PETER Great in his actions as his name, in truth the Father of his Country!

But it may be said, why now in particular do we offer the incense of Gratitude, and light up those altars which ought never to be extinguished? Were we silent on this occasion, the very stones of these walls would bear undoubted testimony, that nothing presents itself before our eyes, but what owes to him its beginning and existence. All is the fruit of his enlightened and penetrating Genius. By the introduction of Arts and Sciences into his country, he hath dispelled the Clouds of Ignorance, and brought Truth to our view. It was he whose military Spirit formed our warriors to become the terror and amazement of the world. He opened first

A 2

those

those mines from whence we draw the sinews of war; to him Religion itself is indebted, and that its great truths are taught by its ministers to the people, was the institution of his wisdom. In a word, whatever excellence presents itself to our sense, or our imagination, PETER either founded, improved, or brought to Perfection.

Indebted as she is for all these benefits, can RUSSIA so far forget herself, as to omit one moment celebrating the name of PETER, and making her boast of him on every occasion? What then is the more particular circumstance of this day? PETER the Great is alive again; he lives in CATHERINE the Second. Those victories, by which RUSSIA astonishes the Universe, are the work of PETER, or rather of his Soul animating our August Sovereign; where, having acquired new powers, it gives birth to whatever is at this day the Glory and Happiness of our Empire.

But let us reserve for another opportunity the history of their great actions, and recount at present those glorious exploits which RUSSIA now displays to wondering nations, events which strike terror into the Universe, and make RUSSIANS weep for joy.

The repeated strokes which break the horns of the Imperial Crescent, re-echo through the known world; and the armies formed by PETER, and directed by CATHERINE, are now held invincible: Difficulties and Dangers, which terrify others, are to them but fresh objects for their courage, and new occasions of triumph. The RUSSIAN Soldier marches on to Glory, and strews his path with trophies; his hands are iron, and his arms are brass, his breast of adamant, and his soul is the soul of a hero.

Let

Let us not therefore impute Cowardice to our Enemies, who could not resist our arms; but acknowledge rather that it is sometimes even glorious to be conquered by Heroes.

But be that as it may, Fame ceases not to blow her trumpet, and we have the sound continually in our ears. Scarce have we begun to celebrate one victory, ere we receive intelligence of another.—Another! what is it?—still the same.—The enemy is vanquished, fled, dispersed. The **RUSSIANS** are conquerors, and in the very camp of the enemy sing praises to the **GOD OF HOSTS**. The richest plunder is not the object they most regard; they seize it without greediness, and share it without envy. The **OTTOMAN** Standards without number covering these walls, afford at once an incontestable proof of **RUSSIAN** Valor and **TURKISH** Weakness.

I could wish to have expatiated more largely on a subject so pleasing and so great; but I must turn to another not less happy, and still more glorious, towards which an impulse of zeal transports me.

In drawing a flight sketch of our Hero's exploits, we seem as it were to have passed in silence the greatest of his undertakings, that which was at once the most famous, the most useful, and was the darling child which particularly engaged his attention. This was the creation of a navy. **RUSSIA**, though surrounded on all sides by the sea, and by neighbouring powers who enjoyed its advantages, by the misfortune of the times, has for a long while seen with an eye of indifference the empire of the waves in the hands of strangers. Navigation was an art not only unknown to the **RUSSIANS**, but perhaps even formidable; and while we lay in this state of indolence, those who were born to envy us felt a secret joy, while at the same time they dreaded to rouse us from our lethargy.

A situ-

A situation so critical and important escaped not the piercing eye of PETER: what cannot a Sovereign do, who is wise, active, and beloved by his people? The Divine Providence having decreed to render RUSSIA illustrious threw a small bark in his way (which still is, and may it ever be, preserved among us!). This was enough to form in a genius so profound and so extensive, sublime and vast ideas. PETER immediately began to construct those floating bulwarks, which were to compose the formidable navy of RUSSIA, formidable not only for the number of its vessels, but for the glory already acquired by its force; for in its infancy, and, if I may so speak, in its very cradle, it obtained victories even over those to whom the art had long time been familiar.

But awake, Great Sovereign, Father of our Country, awake, and see thy darling child in a state of maturity, and in the full lustre of glory. Arise and behold the fruit of thy labors. Thy fleet is not confined within the Baltic; it is not on the Caspian or the Euxine sea, it is not on the ocean of the North. Where then is it to be found? In the Mediterranean; in the regions of the South; under the walls of Constantinople; in those realms where thine eyes and thy thoughts were often directed with an ardent desire to humble the proud Turk. — O! with what joy would thy heart be filled, if — but hark! thy Fleet in the Archipelago, on the coast of Asia, has destroyed the Ottoman Navy. The Eagles of RUSSIA soaring on triumphant wings fill the East with thy sacred name, and force their rapid flight to the walls of Byzantium.

Thy Country intoxicated with joy, and thy illustrious Successor our August Sovereign, consecrates to Thee and thy name, under God, the Glory of our Victories. She conducts us to thy sacred remains (remains ever dear to Russia), to offer there

there our sentiments of Gratitude ; to celebrate thy name ; in that, thy virtues ; and in them, God himself.

Hearken, O beloved Shade ! to the effusions of our hearts ; or rather mayest Thou, Great God of Nature, in thy pure and eternal bliss to which we doubt not thou hast admitted our beloved PETER, suffer him to share those joys, which he has this day given birth to.

But to thee, Great Empress, who with such dignity yield-est thy large share of honor in our victories to the name of PETER, what returns of gratitude can thy country offer, or how pay thee all we owe ? Thine were the orders, Thine the instructions that guided our forces ; Thy prayers to Heaven made the winds fight for us and distress the enemy.

The more illustrious is thy Glory, as thou hast not founded it on conquest only, but on that firmer basis the prosperity of thy people. Full of gratitude and admiration for thy Virtues, and struck with the manifest favour of divine Providence towards thee, we cannot cease to lift up both our hands and hearts to God, that he may continue to thee his protection for ever.

And let thy heart, Great Prince, rejoice ; Thou our High Admiral hast a more than common Share in this Solemnity from that dignity conferred upon thee by thy August Parent. We rejoice together with thee, and firmly trust that thou wilt not let our Fame diminish, but make thy Country still more Glorious. Amen.

F I N I S.

...of the ...
...and ...
...our ...
...has ...

But to that ...
of this ...
of ...
of ...
the ...
you ...

The more ...
of it ...
ity of ...
the ...
our ...
his ...

And let thy heart, Great Prince, rejoice; Then our High
Admiral hath a more than common share in this Solemnity
from that dignity conferred upon thee by thy August Parents.
We rejoice together with thee, 66 JUL 7
not let our fame diminish, but make thy Country still more
Glorious. Amen.

F I N I S

